

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

271459Z Sep 00

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ2526

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	INL-00	DINT-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	WHA-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00
	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7210
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 005460

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1.6X5,6

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [PINS](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MORGAN TSVANGIRAI INFORMS BRITISH HIGH
COMMISSION OF MASS ACTION PLANS

CLASSIFIED BY DCM EARL M. IRVING FOR REASONS 1.5 B/D.

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[1](#). (C) ON SEPTEMBER 27 THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION HERE
SHARED WITH US THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE, CLASSIFIED
"CONFIDENTIAL" AND SENT SEPTEMBER 22, CONCERNING MDC-
SPONSORED MASS ACTION IN ZIMBABWE. PLEASE PROTECT THE
SOURCE. MARK LYALL GRANT, REFERRED TO IN PARA. 2, IS A
SENIOR OFFICER IN THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE'S
AFRICA DEPARTMENT.

BEGIN TEXT:

SUMMARY

MDC OPPOSITION PARTY PREPARING FOR MASS ACTION NEXT
MONTH. PROBABLY LONG-RUNNING GENERAL STRIKE.
MEMBERSHIP BEING PREPARED THROUGH MPS' OUTREACH
MEETINGS. FORMAL NOTICE WILL BE DELIVERED AT MASS RALLY
ON SEPTEMBER 30. PARTY LEADERS ANTICIPATE VIOLENT
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE.

DETAIL

WITH LYALL GRANT (VISITING) I HAD SEPARATE MEETINGS ON
SEPTEMBER 20 AND 21 WITH MDC LEADER MORGAN TSVANGIRAI
AND HIS DEPUTY, GIBSON SIBANDA, WHO IS ALSO PARTY LEADER
IN PARLIAMENT. OUR CALLS FOLLOWED CLOSELY ON THE POLICE
RAIDS ON THE PARTY OFFICES AND THE STATEMENT BY HOME
AFFAIRS MINISTER NKOMO THAT WEAPONS AND INCRIMINATING
PAPERS HAD BEEN FOUND.

WE ASKED THEM TO EXPAND ON TSVANGIRAI'S PASSING
REFERENCES TO MASS ACTION IN HIS REMARKS TO THE PRESS
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AFTER NKOMO'S STATEMENT. TSVANGIRAI SAID THE PRESSURE
FROM THE MEMBERSHIP AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE FOR DIRECT
ACTION WAS HUGE. THE GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO BUDGE FROM
PRE-ELECTION POSITIONS HAD CREATED ANGER AND
FRUSTRATION. MUGABE HAD PUSHED THE PEOPLE TO THE POINT
WHERE MASS ACTION WAS "NOT NEGOTIABLE".

PLANNING WAS WELL ADVANCED. THE CORE FEATURE WOULD BE A
SNAP GENERAL STRIKE. MDC LEADERS ARE STILL UNDECIDED ON
ITS DURATION, BUT ONE OPTION DESCRIBED BY SIBANDA WAS TO
KEEP IT GOING UNTIL MUGABE IS FORCED OUT OF OFFICE. THE
PLAN IS FOR ALL MDC MEMBERS AND LIKE-MINDED PARTIES TO
WORK AS NORMAL UNTIL LUNCHTIME ON A SPECIFIED DAY,
RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AND NOT COME BACK.

NEITHER TSVANGIRAI NOR SIBANDA MENTIONED A DATE, BUT THE
MESSAGE WILL BE SPELLED OUT IN PLAIN TERMS AT CROSS-
COUNTRY RALLIES TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 30 TO MARK THE
MDC'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY. THE STRIKE WILL BEGIN WITHIN
ONE OR TWO WEEKS OF THAT EVENT. TSVANGIRAI HAS

CANCELLED A VISIT TO BRUSSELS PLANNED FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER.

MDC MPS AND OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY BEEN ALERTING CONSTITUENTS TO THE PLANS FOR MASS ACTION. WITH PARLIAMENT IN RECESS SINCE YESTERDAY, THEY WILL BE STEPPING UP THEIR ACTIVITIES NATIONWIDE IN PREPARATION FOR SEPTEMBER 30.

IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE STRIKE WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY PLANNED RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS, BUT SPONTANEOUS
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ACTION, PARTICULARLY IN THE HIGH-DENSITY AREAS IS NOT UNLIKELY. TSVANGIRAI AND SIBANDA BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CRACK DOWN ON THE MOVEMENT WITH ALL THE MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL - VIOLENCE, TEARGAS, ARRESTS, THE WHOLE PANOPLY OF THE POLICE STATE. TSVANGIRAI IS CONFIDENT THAT THIS WILL NOT BREAK THE MOMENTUM. HE SAID THE ACTION WOULD BE MASSIVE AND COUNTRYWIDE: THE SECURITY FORCES SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO CONTAIN IT. HE ADDED THAT ONCE THE ACTION HAD BEGUN, IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTROL IT.

COMMENT

THE MASS ACTION AS DESCRIBED BY THE TWO MDC LEADERS HAS BEEN IN GESTATION FOR SOME TIME. THEIR ACCOUNT CONFIRMS THE REPORTS WE HAVE BEEN GETTING OF MDC PLANNING SESSIONS AND WELL-ATTENDED PREPARATORY MEETINGS IN THE HARARE CONSTITUENCIES. THE STRATEGY IS A RESPONSE TO THE INCREASING ANGER OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO THE SEVERE HARDSHIP OF LIFE IN ZIMBABWE AND THEIR FRUSTRATION AT WHAT THEY SEE AS THE GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO BUDGE FROM THE POLICIES AND ATTITUDES WHICH BROUGHT THIS ABOUT.

TSVANGIRAI CAN EXPECT MASSIVE SUBSTANTIAL IN THE CITIES

SIPDIS
AND MATABELELAND, BUT A KEY FACTOR WILL BE THE RESPONSE

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7211
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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SUBJECT: MORGAN TSVANGIRAI INFORMS BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION OF MASS ACTION PLANS

IN THE RURAL AREAS. HE AND SIBANDA DESCRIBED MASS TURNOUTS AT RECENT MDC RALLIES IN COMMUNITIES WHICH WERE
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SERIOUSLY HIT BY PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE AND RETURNED ZANU-PF MS. TSVANGIRAI HAS NO DOUBT THAT THE CALL FOR ACTION WILL SWEEP THE COUNTRY.

IT IS HIGH RISK. MUGABE'S INSTINCT WILL BE TO RESPOND WITH THE USUAL BATTERIES OF RIOT POLICE SUPPORTED BY THE MILITARY. HE WILL WISH TO PUT DOWN THE ACTION IN ITS EARLY STAGES AND PROBABLY USE IT AS A PRETEXT TO SEIZE THE MDC LEADERSHIP. AN IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR HIM IS WHETHER SUCH A TACTIC WILL ALSO REVERSE THE GROUNDSWELL AGAINST HIM WITHIN ZANU-PF OR WHETHER POTENTIAL DISSIDENTS AND CHALLENGERS WILL RALLY BEHIND HIM IN THE FACE OF A COMMON THREAT.

WE NEED TO CONSIDER HOW TO RESPOND TO A POSSIBLY

EXTENDED PERIOD OF CIVIL STRIFE AND ASSOCIATED
REPRESSION. IN THE MEANTIME WE ARE REDRAFTING OUR
TRAVEL ADVICE TO ALERT VISITORS TO POSSIBLE TROUBLE
ASSOCIATED WITH THE SEPTEMBER 30 RALLIES.

END TEXT.

MCDONALD

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